Education loans from PSU Banks

*14. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased **to state:**

(a) the total amount sanctioned by Punjab Sector Banks as education loans to students across the country;

(b) the number of applications which have been received by each bank across each State during the last financial year;

(c) the time taken to process the applications to grant such loans by the banks; and

(d) the steps being taken to improve the performance **of** the banks for providing better services to quickly release such loans to the needy students across the country?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Data on amount of education loans sanctioned by Public Sector Banks and number of applications received for education loans bank-wise across each State is not being maintained by the RBI. However, according to information reported by the RBI for scheduled commercial banks (including Public Sector Banks), the total amount of education loans (outstanding) as on 23rd November 2007 was Rs. 18,992 crore (provisional).

(c) As per norms prescribed under the Model Education Loan Scheme, the banks are required to dispose of loan applications within a period of 15 days to 1 month. The public sector banks have reported that the above time stipulation is being adhered to if the applications are found complete in all respects.

(d) In order to provide better services to students across the country, the Government has advised banks to institute an on-line system of loan applications. This will enable a student to download the loan application form, apply online and learn the status of his loan application. This facility is now provided by all major public sector banks.

Accommodation for tourists in Buddhist places

*15. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is hardly any infrastructure to accommodate a large number of tourists from East Asia. China etc. in Buddhist places;

(b) if so, what is being done to build the same to facilitate the tourists: and

(c) what is the time-frame to do so?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No. Sir. However, there is shortage of hotel rooms in the country.

(b) and (c) Construction of hotels is primarily a private sector activity. Ministry of Tourism is in regular touch with the State Governments and various land owning agencies like Railways, Ministry of Civil Aviation etc. for creating land banks for hotels, allocating land on joint venture/revenue sharing basis, adopting single window clearance, increasing FAR/FSI. Ministry of Tourism offers capital subsidy for budget hotels of 1,2 and 3 star category in the country.